



Whether Common or Not

By Will M. Maupin.

Christmas Time

I see the lights o' Christmas time
That shine just on ahead—
The Christmas gleams of Land o' dreams

That lie beyond the ice-locked streams,
Where childish joys are spread.

I hear the shouts of childish glee
As, dancing round the Christmas tree,
The yuletide hours are quickly sped

By kiddies six so dear to me.

I hear the sound o' Christmas bells
Borne on the frosty air—
The Christmas bells whose ringing tells

That peace should reign where mankind dwells—
That joy should banish care.

I catch the lilt o' carols sweet
That float adown the frosty street
To usher in the yuletide fair,
When loved ones with their loved ones meet.

I catch the scent of evergreen
From blazing-tapered tree—
The gold and green and silver sheen,
And red of rose that shines between,
To fill all hearts with glee.

The gathered years forgotten quite,
I sit in Christmas' dim twilight,
And with my kiddies 'round my knee

I feel the world's all right—all right!

A Little Fable

"This has been a mighty weary day," complained St. Peter as he closed the gates and prepared to call it a day's work.

"Lots of applicants for admission?" queried the angel whose duty it is to direct those admitted to where they can find the proper equipment.

"Well, not many more than usual," replied the watchful guardian, "but somehow or other it seemed as if there was an usually large proportion of applicants who were below the average."

"Some pretty bad ones, eh?"
"I should say so! One fellow with sidewiskers and a front on him that looked like the bow of a Lusitania, insisted upon being admitted because he had given so many people an opportunity to earn an honest livelihood. And I knew he was one of those fellows who waxed rich off the toil of helpless women."

"Of course he missed out?"

"Yes, I ticketed him the other way. And one fellow came along with a claim for admission on the ground that he gave great sums to charity. I called his attention to the fact that his income was derived from foul and filthy tenements, and from property devoted to purposes that make a mock of decency. He tried to show me that it was all right because if he didn't do it somebody else would, and the other fellow might not give anything to charity. I sent him down with instructions to think it over."

"His like show up every day?"

"Yes, but this was a particularly aggravated case. And I had to reject the application of a woman who was always too busy working for the heathen across the ocean to do anything for the helpless little folks at her own door. Then, there was the deacon who passed the plate on Sunday and gave shortweight to the widows on Monday. And the coal dealer whose scales had been doctored; and the manufacturer who doped the medicines sold for little

children; and the man who adulterated the foodstuffs he sold—O, there was a big bunch today. But it's time to go home and take a rest, and I'm go—"

Just then there was an insistent knocking at the great gates and Peter, heaving a weary sigh, inserted the golden key and threw wide the portals.

"I know I'm a bit late, St. Peter," remarked the new arrival, trying to walk right in, "but I was busy attending to an important matter and couldn't get here any quicker."

"Just a moment, please," said St. Peter, barring the passage. "You'll have to show cause before you are allowed inside."

"Why," gasped the astonished applicant, "I thought you knew me!"

"I think I do," remarked St. Peter. "That's why you'll have to come across with some reasons."

"That will be easy," remarked the man with confidence. "I am the man who endowed a big college. I subscribed liberally to charity. I was a trustee in one of the largest and most fashionable churches in my city. I was director in a dozen corporations, president of the city's leading financial institution, and neither political party dared make a move without consulting me."

"That's good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough," said St. Peter, leaning wearily against a gatepost as he spoke. "What were you so busy about that you arrived here after closing time?"

"I was engaged in a campaign of education calculated to banish an old superstition that has done much to injure mankind."

"I know what you were doing!" snapped St. Peter. "You were heading the anti-Santa Claus propaganda. You are one of those narrow-minded, cold-blooded, shrivelled-hearted individuals who are trying to banish Santa Claus under the pretense that he is merely a myth instead of a real being. You want to take Santa Claus out of the hearts and minds of innocent little children; you want to take joy out of their hearts and stuff into their heads a lot of stuff they'll be the better off for not knowing until long after. With canting and sniveling hypocrisy you pretend that you want to banish superstition, when the fact is you merely want to fasten your materialism on everybody. You are—"

"But, my dear St. Peter! I—"

"I've heard enough!" exclaimed the irate old gatekeeper. "YOU ARE THE MAN WHO IS TRYING TO BANISH SANTA CLAUS! There's no more to be said. Push the button over there. If the elevator doesn't come up, just open the door and drop down. That's all for you!"

And slamming the big gates shut with a bang that made the jasper walls tremble to their foundations, St. Peter thrust the golden key into the lock and turned it, then seizing his staff strode firmly down the golden street.

"If I hadn't been so tired," mused St. Peter, "I'd have told that fellow just what I thought about him."

Shrinking His Caput

Raymond Robins is the man who handles the industrial end of the Men's Religion and Forward Movement, and there isn't a man in America who knows the different angles of the industrial problem better than Robins knows them. Coal

miner, gold seeker in Alaska, lumberjack, section hand, farm laborer, steel worker, garmentworker—Robins has worked at them all in order to get the viewpoint of the worker and the actual facts about conditions. He has a fund of stories, some pathetic, some gay, and some about himself that are really funny. And here's one of the latter:

Several years ago Robins was in a little city in an eastern state and was assigned to talk on the industrial problem in a church belonging to a very staid denomination that clung closely to tradition. One tradition was that no man should occupy the pulpit without being dressed in clerical robes. Robins had no robes, but finally the minister outfitted him in a robe much too long. Robins tripped over the skirt while ascending the pulpit steps and nearly fell. During his address he was fearfully bothered by the flowing sleeves when he made a gesture. But he finally managed to overcome all these handicaps and made a fairly good talk. At any rate a number of people told him so at the finish. Among them was a handsome young lady who was very enthusiastic in her expressions of admiration and interest in the subject, and her remarks made Robins feel that he had made a decided impression. Returning to the hotel in company with the staid old minister Robins, curious and somewhat swelled up, asked:

"Who was the young lady in the fur coat and fur hat who spoke to me at the close?"

"That's a sad case, Mr. Robins," replied the old minister. "She is the daughter and only child of one of our leading citizens. She is rich in her own right and heiress to a million more."

"I see nothing sad about that, if she isn't letting the possession of money spoil her life," said Robins.

"That is not my point," continued the minister. "The poor girl had a long seige of sickness about ten years ago, and it left her feeble-minded."

"And that," remarked Mr. Robins, in telling the story, "caused my hat to drop down over my ears, whereas it had been perched on the extreme apex of my head a few moments before."

Nomenclature

About a dozen of us were congregated in the smoking compartment of the day coach, and of course we talked politics and religion and various other things. Finally we fell upon the topic of names.

I confessed to being an Irishman with a French name, won somewhere back in the sixteenth century when a lot of Irishmen joyfully went over to France and fought against the British flag. Another man proudly boasted of a Pennsylvania Dutch name that sounded like a cross between a sneeze and a hicough. Finally one man spoke up. He said:

"One has but to read the daily newspapers to ascertain that the foreigners are taking this country. Good old American names have almost disappeared from business circles. Our American traditions are being forgotten, and if something is not done, and soon, we will have lost our Americanism."

That sounded pretty good, but before I could ask the speaker his name we pulled into Omaha and we all debarked. When I arrived at the Paxton I found the speaker just ahead of me at the clerk's desk. When he had registered I took the pen, but before putting down my name and address I looked to see what my fellow traveler had written. And this is what I saw:

"Anton Petrovolski, Gary, Ind."

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